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Does American Education Still Offer Hope from an International Perspective?

By Lori Lee
NDG Contributing Writer

People choose to migrate because they are dissatisfied with their lives. Many just want a place to start over. It may be their political environment, violence, or poverty that causes them to leave, but whatever the reason, migration is a huge undertaking that brings on a lot of work and stress. Accompanied by changing jobs and leaving families behind, migration is among the highest of stressors, comparable to divorce, job loss, and major illness, according to the Social Readjustment Rating Scale.

People migrate because they lack hope, explained Gabriela Oliveira, Associate Professor of Education and Brazil Studies at Harvard, speaking at an October American Community Media briefing. They leave their homes because they look around and find little reason to believe things will change.

Some may find hope in seeking a higher education elsewhere. Others have lost their hope but still dream of earning more so their children



Migration, driven by a loss of hope and difficult living conditions, underscores the vital role of equitable, inclusive education in helping immigrants and marginalized students rebuild their lives, achieve social mobility, and strengthen society as a whole. (DWG Studio)

might hope for a better life. Those from poorer nations may consider it a luxury for their kids simply to be able to focus on finishing school without having to work.

Most Americans already have this luxury. Ninety percent of U.S. citizens over age 25 have graduated high school, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This shows

improvement for the country placing it just below South Korea at 96.4% and well above Brazil at 56%, according to recent World Bank data.

Though younger children are more likely to stay in school and graduate, adolescents, in the midst of finding their identities, can stray

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Civil Rights Movement for All Races

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AI Brings New Era in Treatment, Assessment

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People In The News ...



MacKenzie Scott



Rev. Crystal Bates

NDG Quote of the Week:

"In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

- Booker T. Washington

MacKenzie Scott

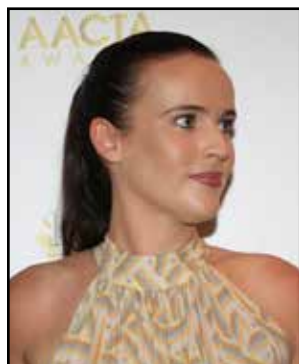
There are moments in history when a single act of generosity reveals the moral decay of an entire nation.

MacKenzie Scott's \$38 million gift to Alabama State University, the largest in its 158-year history, is such a moment. It is not merely a financial transaction, nor the casual benevolence of the wealthy.

It is a moral indictment against a society that has grown indifferent to the suffering of its Black citizens, against a government that starves their schools, and against a class of newly rich who have forgotten the communal obligations of success.

Dr. Quinton T. Ross Jr., the university's president, called it a defining moment for Alabama State, and indeed it is. His words ring with the gratitude of those who have built excellence in the face of deprivation.

"Ms. Scott's generosity affirms Alabama State University's reputation as a



Eva Rinaldi / Wikimedia

catalyst for excellence and innovation in higher education," he said.

But her act is more than affirmation. It is a resurrection, and a call to remember that Black institutions remain the crucibles of America's moral and intellectual power. In recent weeks, Scott has dispersed her fortune with quiet conviction. Seventy million to the United Negro College Fund to strengthen endowments across thirty-seven member schools; sixty-three million to Morgan State University, her second gift to that campus in less than five years; and

one hundred and one million combined to Morgan State and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore in a span of days.

Her giving, unshackled by stipulations or vanity, stands in luminous contrast to an era defined by greed and indifference. The plutocracy that dominates modern life often extracts from the many to enrich the few. Scott reverses that equation.

She does not donate to dominate. She gives to repair. Her wealth, born of corporate conquest, has become the instrument of restoration. It stands as a redemption, perhaps, of what that very system has broken. One cannot ignore the symbolism of her actions.

At a time when the federal government withholds support from historically Black institutions, when affirmative action has been dismantled, and when diversity programs are vilified, a white woman from

the highest ranks of privilege has become the single most consistent benefactor of Black education in the nation. It is as though she has seen, from her rarefied vantage point, what America refuses to see: that the progress of its Black citizens is not a charity, but the measure of its own civilization.

Yet even as she gives, others remain silent. The silence of Black wealth resounds across the land. It is a silence that mocks the very principles of uplift once preached from our pulpits and classrooms.

Attorney Benjamin Crump's call to the wealthy—"If you've been

blessed, you got to pass the blessing on"—echoes unanswered.

The great sons and daughters of our race who have ascended to fortune, those who built empires on the faith of our people, turn their eyes away from the institutions that birthed them. They forget the hands that lifted them from obscurity.

They forget that their wealth is not solely their own, but part of the moral economy of a people who have suffered together and triumphed together. The Black Press, like the HBCUs, stands as an unbroken monument to endurance. It has spoken truth through lynchings, wars, and be-

trayals. Yet it now faces extinction not from white suppression alone, but from the neglect of its own.

"If the Black Press falls," Crump warned, "so does the record of our struggle, our triumph, and our faith."

Scott's philanthropy, then, is not simply about money. It is about memory. The moral memory of a nation that has forgotten the debt it owes to those it once enslaved and now ignores. In her giving, she restores something elemental, the belief that one's prosperity is meaningless if it does not lift others.

W.E.B. Du Bois wrote

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Rev. Crystal Bates

Reverend Crystal Bates is now the Texas NAACP's assistant secretary. Rev. Bates who is also vice chair of the Environmental & Climate Justice Committee for the Texas State NAACP is excited about her new role.

"I bring organizational skills, meticulous attention to detail and an unwavering commitment to transparency — all essential qualities that I believe will help me serve effectively and faithfully in the role of assistant secretary," said Rev. Bates.

Rev. Bates' new role is the latest position she has held that furthers her dedication to civic action.



She led the mobilization and activation of the DFW Metro NAACP in 2020 and was recently elected to her third term as president. Under Bates' leadership, the DFW Metro NAACP has conducted Back-to-School Drives, a Voter Registration Blitz that distributed

20,000 voter registration door hangers in three days, a Voter Education & Empowerment Dinner Series, weekly Voter Registration Drives in multiple locations and an annual Youth Hackathon.

Additionally, she just concluded being president of the Coppell Rotary Club, which makes significant impacts globally and locally. As the club's first African American woman president in its 41-year history, Rev. Bates increased membership by 68%.

Also, Rev. Bates is the president of her nonprofit CBATES, a proud Millennial Board Member of The Black Academy of Arts and Letters, and a chaplain.

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Black Blood, American Freedom: How the Civil Rights Movement Protected All Races

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

They called it Shared Chains. The episode ran on the "Blaac718" podcast, and in that dim space between sound and silence, an Asian American man spoke a truth this country has long tried to drown.

"I always tell people," he said quietly, "the day the Latino, African American, Asian, and other communities realize they share the same oppressor is the day we start winning. Because if it wasn't for the civil rights movement, there would not be 22 million Asian Americans in this country. Your success, your prosperity, your civil rights that you enjoy right now were paid for with Black blood."

There it was.

The truth this nation despises most. The truth is that America's freedom has always been underwritten by the suffering of Black people. That the Constitution itself, written in the ink of ideals and the sweat of enslaved hands, was never worth the paper it was printed on until Black Americans forced it to be.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed segregation and discrimination, dragging America closer to its own promises. But that act was not born from goodwill.

It was born from the an-



FG Trade via NNPA

guish of a people beaten, jailed, and humiliated, who still believed enough in justice to demand it from those who denied them humanity.

And when the world began to change, it changed because of them. When President Lyndon Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, ending the racist quota system that favored white Europeans, he called it "a triumph for liberty." But the liberty he spoke of was a harvest planted by Black hands and watered with their blood.

Latino farmworkers marched because Black people had marched before them. Asian Americans found a home because the civil rights movement forced open the nation's gates. Women, people with disabilities, immigrants from the corners of the globe, all walked through doors built by those who had been shackled.

The Chicano movement, born of frustration and hun-

ger, drew its rhythm from the same drumbeat that sounded in Montgomery and Selma. The Civil Rights Act, meant to crush Jim Crow, became the armor for others—Asian Americans who had been told they did not belong, now shielded by laws created from Black suffering.

"If it weren't for the Civil Rights Movement, there wouldn't have been a farmworkers' movement," said Vanessa Saplad, a Texas-based registered nurse whose family emigrated from Colombia. "It showed our people that protest could bring power, that dignity wasn't something you begged for — it was something you stood up and claimed."

Added Michelle Cephus, a D.C.-based accountant and LGBTQ advocate. "The Civil Rights Movement taught us what courage looks like in the face of hate. Stonewall didn't happen in a vacuum; it happened because people like

Dr. King showed us that silence is surrender, and love is an act of resistance."

And yet, this country forgets.

It forgets with a stubbornness that borders on sin. It forgets who gave it its conscience. It forgets that every movement for equality in this land began with the Black demand to be seen as human. It forgets, and in its forgetting, it repeats.

"We watched Black folks march for equality, and it gave us language for our own struggles for fair housing, for fair wages, for belonging," said Peter De Cruz Villareal, a farm worker of Filipino descent. "Their fight taught us how to stand tall, even when the system calls you invisible."

Enrique Vasquez, a Puerto Rico native and D.C. resident, added that, "Every scholarship, every chance to speak my mind, every job that doesn't question my accent is the echo of the Civil Rights Movement. What started for one group became a promise for all of us."

Donald Trump's second administration has stripped away the layers of decency this nation once pretended to have. His orders have erased Black history from national institutions, silenced diversity programs, and rolled back protections that once shielded the vul-

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Keep up with the news

O N L I N E

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AI Set to Transform Pediatric Neuro-Oncology: A New Era in Treatment and Assessment

(Newswise) Researchers at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) published new guidance to help responsibly implement artificial intelligence (AI) in pediatric neuro-oncology. The work includes a policy review from the AI in Response Assessment in Pediatric Neuro-Oncology (AI-RAPNO) subcommittee and a companion review in *The Lancet Oncology*, detailing how AI can enhance tumor assessment, support treatment planning and improve outcomes for children with brain tumors.

RAPNO is an international consortium that develops criteria for response assessment in pediatric brain tumors. AI-RAPNO is its subcommittee focused on translating AI into those criteria. The new policy blueprint addresses how to standardize imaging, validate algorithms in pediatric populations, and ensure equitable access so that AI tools are safe, effective, and trustworthy at the point of



DWG Studio

care.

Pediatric central nervous system (CNS) tumors are the most common solid tumors in children and adolescents, with approximately 48,000 new cases annually worldwide. Prognosis varies due to the differing treatability and lethality of tumors, and treatments often result in long-term side effects and reduced quality of life. MRI plays a crucial role in diagnosing and monitoring these tumors.

While AI advancements

like 3D tumor auto-segmentation and radiation therapy planning have been FDA-approved for adult oncology, pediatric standards were lacking. The AI-RAPNO policy and its companion review address this gap by providing actionable clinical translation recommendations.

Key recommendations from the AI-RAPNO policy include:

- **Standardized Imaging Inputs and Labels:** These are consistent and clear definitions used in MRI scans

of children to improve how doctors evaluate and monitor brain tumors. This includes specific sequences, data descriptions, and outlined areas on images, all tailored to the RAPNO initiative for better understanding of children's brain health.

- **Pediatric-Specific Validation:** This means ensuring that the imaging techniques and data work well across different groups of children, considering their age, type of tumor, location, and the type of MRI scanner used.

- **Trustworthy Evaluation:** This involves using clear and honest reporting of results, understanding the limits and accuracy of the techniques, and involving medical professionals in the process to ensure reliable outcomes.

- **Equity and Access:** This focuses on making sure that all children, regardless of their background or location, have access to the best possible imaging

care. It involves addressing data shortages, preventing biases, and supporting resource-limited areas.

- **Prospective Pilots:** These are initial test runs where AI tools are used in real clinical settings and trials. They are designed to improve the methods used to assess children's brain tumors, in line with RAPNO goals.

"These recommendations offer a practical roadmap to move from promising research to safe, equitable bedside use," said Anahita Fathi Kazerooni, PhD, lead author of the policy article and senior author of the review, co-lead of AI-RAPNO, and Assistant Professor at CHOP's Center for Data Driven Discovery in Biomedicine (D3b) within the Division of Neurosurgery, and the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Pennsylvania. "As AI evolves, standardization, validation and transparency will be key to realizing personalized care

for children with brain tumors."

The companion review in *The Lancet Oncology* synthesizes evidence that AI can automate and improve precision of tumor measurements compared with manual methods; support non-invasive molecular subtyping to inform treatment; predict recurrence and progression risk to guide surveillance; and evaluate treatment-related side effects, informing survivorship and quality-of-life care.

"These guidelines help clinicians understand when and how to trust AI outputs, what evidence to look for, and how to integrate tools with RAPNO-aligned decision-making," said Ali Nabavizadeh, MD, senior author of the policy article and co-senior author of the review, co-lead of AI-RAPNO, Director of the Translational Imaging Research Unit at CHOP's D3b and Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

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nerable.

The cruelty of his immigration policies has reawakened an old truth: that the machinery of oppression never sleeps. It only changes its targets.

But through every betrayal, Black Americans remain

this country's most honest mirror. When others look away, they stand and face the fire.

They always have.

They did in Montgomery, where a woman sat down so a nation could rise. They did in Selma, where blood

mingled with river water to baptize a new generation of freedom fighters. And they did again in the streets of Minneapolis, crying for a breath that belongs to us all.

In the final breath of Shared Chains, that same Asian voice spoke again. "Liberty and rights don't exist forever," he said.

"They exist only as long as we protect them. And if you want them to continue, it won't be Black people fighting this battle again. You will have to fight it."

The warning hung in the air like smoke. Because every gain that America enjoys, every inch of justice, every whisper of free-

dom, was carved from the wounds of those who had nothing left to give but their blood. And the question, the only question that has ever mattered in this nation, still stands: when the fire comes again, who will fight?

"The Civil Rights Movement didn't just change laws, it changed what we

could dream," said Sybil Morehead, a 67-year-old retired South Carolina teacher. "My students today sit in classrooms that my grandmother could only clean. We're still fighting, but because of that movement, we're fighting from the inside now, not from the outside looking in."

← SCOTT, from Page 2

of the "double consciousness" that afflicts the Negro in America, the struggle to see oneself through the eyes of a world that

despises you. Today, the irony is reversed. America must learn to see itself through the eyes of those it has wronged. MacKenzie

Scott, for all her privilege, seems to have glimpsed that truth. She gives the impression that she has looked into the soul of the republic and found it wanting.

Her actions do not ab-

solve the sins of this nation. They reveal them.

And in revealing them, they offer a path, not of atonement, but of accountability.

For every dollar she

gives to rebuild a school, there are a thousand more that others with power might give but will not. One woman has chosen conscience over complacency.

The question that re-

mains is whether the rest of America—Black and white alike—will choose to follow her example or remain comfortable in the quiet decay of its own moral poverty.

25 States Suing Trump USDA for Gutting Food Aid to 40 million Americans

By Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Senior National
Correspondent

Twenty-five attorneys general across the country and three governors have filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture and its Secretary, Brooke Rollins, after the agency moved to suspend the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, better known as SNAP, which helps more than 40 million Americans buy food each month.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Massachusetts, argues that Rollins and the USDA unlawfully halted the program despite having billions of dollars in contingency funds that Congress specifically approved for emergencies like the current federal government shutdown. It names both the USDA and the Office of Management and Budget, led by Russell Vought, as defendants, accusing them of violating federal



Andrii Dodonov via NNPA

law and the Administrative Procedure Act by arbitrarily denying food assistance to millions of people who depend on it. "SNAP is the largest anti-hunger program in D.C., and if these cuts are allowed to go through, tens of thousands of District children, seniors, and families will be unable to afford food," said District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Schwab. "The adverse downstream impacts on public health, education, and public safety will be immediate, catastrophic, and irreparable. Additionally, the economic impact on our local business community will be severe as hundreds of SNAP retailers, includ-

ing many that operate in food deserts, will lose a vital revenue stream. If these stores are forced to close, even non-SNAP recipients will lose access to critical sources of food."

According to the complaint, the USDA ordered states on October 24 to suspend all November SNAP benefit allotments until further notice, claiming insufficient funding due to the lapse in congressional appropriations. But attorneys general in 25 jurisdictions argue that the agency's position is both unlawful and immoral, as Congress has already provided two separate \$3 billion contingency reserves specifically to cov-

er such emergencies. The complaint further alleges that the USDA has tapped other emergency funds to reopen farm service offices and finance other programs during the shutdown, while refusing to use similar funds to feed families. For the District of Columbia and so many others, the impact will be devastating. In fiscal year 2025, an average of 141,000 D.C. residents relied on SNAP each month, including 47,000 children and 24,000 elderly individuals. The suspension will also cripple the local economy. More than 420 local retailers, including over 320 small "mom and pop" stores operating in food deserts, depend heavily on SNAP purchases. Many already run on razor-thin margins, and without those sales, they risk permanent closure.

The coalition argues that the USDA's decision defies decades of precedent. During every prior government shutdown, SNAP has continued to operate, and the agency has always used available funds to prevent hunger. This is the first time in history that benefits have been interrupted since the program's inception in 1964. The 51-page lawsuit paints a dire picture. It notes that even as the USDA claims poverty, its contingency accounts hold billions of unused dollars, including a \$23 billion "Section 32" fund drawn from customs receipts and agricultural tariffs. The agency recently used part of that fund to cover the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program through October, but refused to extend the same courtesy to

SNAP recipients. The suit argues that this selective funding violates both federal law and the agency's duty to act rationally and in good faith.

Food banks, many already overwhelmed, are bracing for surges in demand. Governors in several plaintiff states, including California and Minnesota, have already deployed emergency funds to keep families fed. Schwab warned that the consequences go beyond hunger. "The ripple effects of this decision will reach every corner of our city," he said. "Children who are hungry cannot learn, seniors will face life-threatening health risks, and small businesses will go under. This fight is about basic human decency and about keeping food on the table for those who need it most."

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Dallas College Wins National Award for Innovation in Student Success

Dallas College has been named a national leader in student success innovation, earning EAB's Technology Pioneer Award at the company's Connected25 conference in Orlando, Florida.

This recognition highlights Dallas College's bold use of technology and data to remove barriers, support students and drive record success. The award also includes a \$1,000 student scholarship donation, which will be distributed to students through Dallas College Foundation.

Dr. Karen Stills, Dallas College senior associate vice chancellor of student success, accepted the award on behalf of the institution.

"At Dallas College, innovation isn't just a goal — it's a key ingredient for student success. By harnessing cutting-edge technology, we discover new and creative ways to connect with students and break down barriers that threaten their success," Dr. Stills said. "This award recognizes our team's commitment to leveraging technology to build supportive pathways toward success, at scale."

Ninety-six percent of Dallas College Student Success leaders have completed professional development focused on data concepts and culture, and more than 50 Student Success professionals were selected for an inaugural Artificial Intelligence Inno-



Dallas College (2)

vation Collective designed to enhance AI fluency.

Recent student success outcomes include:

- 78% persistence rate, the highest in the college's history
- More than 19,000 credentials awarded in the 2024-2025 academic year
- 36% increase in reverse transfer credential awarding
- 45% increase in data-mined credential awarding
- 44% increase in at-

tendance at New Student Orientations from 2024 to 2025

- 55% increase in first-year students completing a career or transfer engagement milestone
- 92% of first-year students have a program of study (10% increase)
- 84% of first-year students have a documented career or transfer goal
- Success coaching team supported more than 200,000 student sessions

These achievements were made possible through the integration of data and AI-driven tools into student support strategies, enabling real-time insights, personalized outreach and timely interventions.

Key technologies include:

- EAB Navigate 360: Summarizes data, monitors student progress and generates reports for targeted communication and support
- EAB Journeys: Creates

personalized action plans based on student goals

- EAB Forage: Offers virtual job simulations to support career exploration

• EdSights: Launched "Ellie," an AI powered virtual assistant who engages with first-year students to capture their needs and feedback

- Waitwell: A virtual waiting room that empowers staff to triage student needs and connect them to appropriate support

"As pressures on higher

education mount, EAB's university partners are embracing AI-driven technology to modernize operations, make better use of data and enhance student support," said Scott Schirmeier, EAB president of technology. "Our 2025 Student Success Collaborative Award winners demonstrate how AI-enabled tools help staff elevate the student experience, improve graduation rates and launch more students into successful careers."



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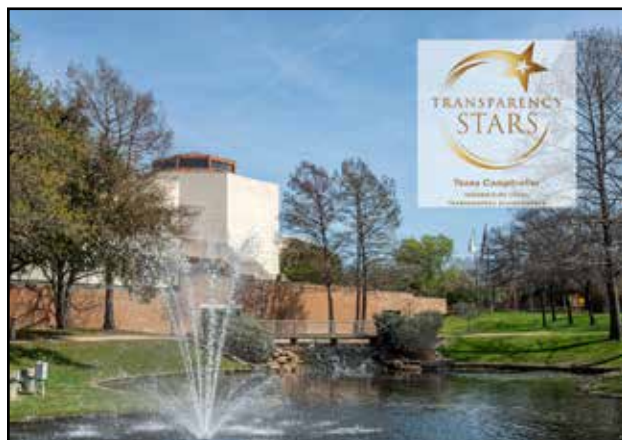
Carrollton Achieves All Six State Comptroller Transparency Awards

The City of Carrollton has been awarded all six Transparency Stars possible through the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Transparency Stars program.

The Texas Comptroller's program recognizes local governments that have completed all requirements for going above and beyond in their transparency practices and expanding their transparency efforts by providing clear and meaningful financial information through documents, visualization, and other formats.

The program recognizes great breadth and depth in the information presented for each specific Transparency Star awarded, making each star a prestigious achievement.

"Financial transparency



City of Carrollton

is a core value for the City of Carrollton, and this award demonstrates the City's commitment to open government," Mayor Steve Babick said.

"We hold ourselves to high standards in all departments and work hard to remain accountable to the public on how spending and budgetary issues are handled, and

continue to expand our best practices to ensure Carrollton remains the City that families and businesses want to call home."

Carrollton was the first entity to be awarded a Traditional Finance Transparency Star in 2016 and the first entity to be recognized with four stars. With the receipt of the fifth star in August and the sixth

and final on Tuesday, September 30, Carrollton became the 13th local government in the state to be awarded all six stars in the current program.

The City has earned and maintained the following stars since their original award dates.

- Traditional Finances (March 2016) provides insight into revenues and expenditures, positions, and property tax information.

- Debt Obligations (August 2016) provides information related to total outstanding debt obligations and historical bond election information.

- Economic Development (August 2016) provides information on the City's economic incentives agreements, related tax information, jobs created, and capi-

tal investments received for the agreements.

- Public Pensions (September 2016) provides insight into the City's funding ratio, amortization, rates of return, unfunded actuarial accrued liabilities, and determined contribution rates.

- Open Government & Compliance (August 2025) provides information related to total outstanding debt obligations and historical bond election information.

- Contracts & Procurement (September 2025) provides information related to service with customers and vendors, as well as transparency with the public by

implementing and supporting processes that provide timely, cost-effective, and high-quality contracts, and expenditure reports.

"Transparency remains a primary focus for the department as we continue to be outstanding stewards of City Resources," Carrollton Director of Finance Melissa Everett said. "The state comptroller's office reviews and audits each city's transparency information annually to ensure the required criteria is being met in every area and may revoke an award should they determine an awardee's transparency information no longer meets the criteria or is no longer in keeping with the program's goals and intent."

The City's website is equipped with the latest fiscal year's budget, check register, comprehensive annual financial report, un-

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Same Story for Dallas in Latest Denver Defeat

By Jamal Baker
NDG Contributing Writer

Another year, another loss to Denver. The Dallas Cowboys fell 44-24 to the Denver Broncos at Empower Field at Mile High on Sunday—their eighth straight defeat in the series since 1995.

In a highly anticipated matchup between the Cowboys' high-powered offense and Denver's formidable defense, the Dallas offense appeared to be overmatched during their porous and sloppy showing.

The Cowboys played undisciplined and were not fundamentally sound throughout the game—totaling nine accepted penalties, including three pre-snap penalties in the first



eight minutes.

"It starts with us looking at ourselves," Cowboys coach Brian Schottenheimer said Monday. "Why it happens, No. 1. The first one you're down there in the red zone, it's loud. Low red zone. We're bringing the guy in motion and Guyton is amped up and wanting to go so he flinches. It shouldn't happen. Tyler knows that. He knew that

before anybody else. You look at the crowd noise and the environment, maybe we had a little bit too many shifts and motions. That's who we are. We do it all the time. We do it out here with crowd noise all the time. I just think it's settling in.

"The guys were probably pressing a little bit. They wanted to get the ball in the end zone. At the end of the day, it can't happen. And we

have to fix it. We're the second-most penalized team in the league, if not the first, and that's unacceptable."

Star wide receivers CeeDee Lamb and George Pickens had 14 catches and 152 yards, while tight end Jake Ferguson did not record a single reception.

Quarterback Dak Prescott struggled to find a rhythm—throwing for 188 yards with two interceptions and no touchdowns.

"It's all about preparation," Lamb said of the offenses' struggles Sunday. "We've got to come out and execute the things that we've always been able to do throughout the week. And for us, understanding that is 17 games. I kind of lose track of what week it is, but I do feel like it's

about time for us to start winning consecutively and putting streaks together."

When the offense has a rough day at the office, the Cowboys basically have no chance at a victory.

Schottenheimer also must do a better job of knowing the identity of his team and personnel by being more aggressive on fourth and short situations.

Late in the third quarter, the Cowboys trailed 30-17 and had the ball close to midfield with a down and distance of 4th and 5. Instead of leaning on the team's greatest strength—the offense—Schottenheimer deferred to the team's greatest weakness by punting and putting the defense back on the field.

The Broncos, of course,

walked right down the field and scored a touchdown to go up three scores, 37-17.

"When you look at it, I don't think any of us coached or played well enough," said Schottenheimer. "... We did not play well, we did not coach well. We didn't coach very well. I wasn't very good today. I don't think [Matt Eberflus] thinks he was very good today. Klayton [Adams] doesn't think he was very good today.

"We'll look at it. And we've got an extra day this week to get ready for Arizona, and that's what we're gonna do."

Dallas now sits at 3-4-1 on the year and will look to bounce back against the Arizona Cardinals at AT&T Stadium this Sunday.

Jubilee Theatre Presents 'The Voices of Donny Hathaway'

FORT WORTH, TX — Jubilee Theatre proudly presents The Voices of Donny Hathaway, an electrifying tribute to one of the most influential voices in soul, gospel, and R&B.

Directed by Khira Hailey and written by Robert King Jr., the production celebrates Hathaway's extraordinary legacy through

music, storytelling, and performance.

Audiences will be immersed in a powerful journey that traces his path from gospel beginnings to international acclaim as one of the 20th century's most beloved and soulful artists.

Performances open on Friday, November 7, 2025, at 7 p.m. at the Jubilee Theatre

(506 Main Street in Fort Worth).

Tickets are available at jubileetheatre.org or by calling (817) 338-4411.

Featuring a dynamic ensemble and live performances of Hathaway's greatest hits, The Voices of Donny Hathaway cap-

See JUBILEE, Page 13

AWARDS, from Page 7

claimed funds and property, and debt information. In addition, there are up to seven years of past annual budgets available.

The financial reports provided on the City's website give taxpayers a transparent look at where their money goes.

For a high-level, easy-

to-read compilation of the City's budgetary and financial status, a digital version of the latest 2024 Popular Annual Financial Report, or PAFR, is available for review on the City's website at cityofcarrollton.com/accounting. It includes not only financial information, but also a community pro-

file, an overview of Carrollton's activities and accomplishments from the past year, a look ahead at exciting local developments, and trend data for Texas municipalities.

For a deeper insight into the City's strong fiscal performance and responsible spending practices, visit cityofcarrollton.com/finance.

Film Review: 'Springsteen: Deliver Me From Nowhere' is a Solid Watch

By Dwight Brown
NNPA Film Critic

(***) “I don’t want to have to explain it.” That’s a demand many artists can understand. Not having to elaborate on their creativity, just expressing it is the quest.

That’s also the central issue in this quiet chapter of Bruce Springsteen’s life. An epoch that trapped him in the worst of times emotionally, but not creatively. The singer-songwriter, who’s won 22 Grammys, two Golden Globes and an Academy Award, was adrift. Writer/director Scott Cooper who bases this bio/film/mus/dra on a book by Warren Zanes, *Deliver Me From Nowhere*, captures that mood. That’s the seed.

Hard to recollect and depict the entire career of an iconic rock star in 120 minutes (editor Pamela Martin). Easier to look through a window. To catch a glimpse. A period that catalogues pivotal



20th Century Studios

moments. That was 1982, when Springsteen’s spirit was bruised and he created his acoustic “Nebraska” album. He’d shunned writing in a studio and conceived songs from a bedroom in Jersey. Laid tracks down on a TEAC 144 Port-a-studio four-track cassette recorder. Just him, a guitar, harmonica and his tortured soul.

On the heels of a powerful live concert, Bruce “the Boss” Springsteen (Jeremy Allen White, *The Bear*) is energized by his performance and chants from a raucous audience. As he walks out into the

night air, outside The Stone Pony music venue in Asbury Park, NJ, an old acquaintance introduces him to his sister, Faye (Odessa Young). The troubadour takes her number and puts it in a pocket, for later.

Something is eating at him. After touring to support his successful, heartland rock and roll album *The River*, he’s in a different head space. Influenced by crime/thriller films like *Badlands* and complex books by Flannery O’Connor, he exiles himself to a home in Colts Neck, NJ and writes what

he’s feeling. Deep depression caused by trauma. Caused by an abusive alcoholic dad (Stephen Graham, *Snatch*) and a mom (Gaby Hoffman) who couldn’t always protect him.

The creative journey that ensues puts his career on a different path. It threatens relationships with his record company and leaves producer/manager/confidant John Landau (Jeremy Strong, *The Apprentice*) holding the bag and dodging an onslaught of pressure. Springsteen’s protector encourages the artist to continue, and he’ll handle the friction: “I’ll deal with the noise.”

The soul-searching exploration that follows takes the man who looks like the world’s strongest musician to a weakened, vulnerable and barely able to cope state. Career challenges, writing music and PTSD don’t make him boyfriend material. As he’s pursued and pressured by Faye, he insists he knows his limi-

tations: “I don’t want this to be more than what I’m up to... I don’t know how to love you any better than I do now, and that’s not enough.”

The melancholy storyline becomes more compelling by the minute, helped greatly by profound dialogue. You’re drawn into a sadness that’s pronounced. It’s in his expressions. In the solemn folksinger songs. What’s on view takes you into the head of a music solider who has lost his bravura and his way. The introverted leanings become most obvious when he writes “Born In the USA” — as a quieter song. Then when he tests it in a studio with his band and rocks it the f—k-out, that burst of light among the darkness is a welcomed shock. It reminds you that somewhere, there’s the other Bruce. The lively one his fans know. Not this stranger.

That glimpse of a high-voltage spirit is a teaser that might make fans wish this

material had taken a different approach. A different chapter. Certainly, dramas about depression are purposeful, even if all they do is shed light on the disease. But that subject and this indie-film-feel style will likely narrow the amount of movie fans in theaters, and therefore profits. Repeat viewings are highly unlikely. However, from an artistic standpoint, watching and listening to the creation of the *Nebraska* album is a hauntingly beautiful experience. Artistry in the purest sense. That’s what viewers will take away.

The first moments of the film are particularly jarring because White looks nothing like Springsteen. The Golden Globe Award-winning actor wasn’t a singer or guitar player, beforehand. He feigns being a vocalist well, but doesn’t have a voice that resonates. He plays simple chords on the acoustic gui-

See FILM, Page 13

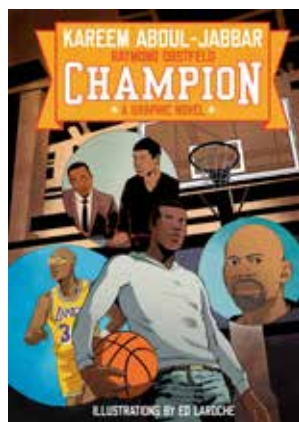
NDG Bookshelf: 'Champion' Offers Sports, Biography and Inspiration in One Shot

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Your future is all laid out. Work a few summers, graduate, go to college, gather awards and go on to a great career, more awards, big money, lots of fame. That’s Plan A and there is no Plan B. But in the new graphic novel, “Champion” by Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Raymond Obstfeld, illustrated by Ed Laroche, life may have other ideas for you.

Monk Travers just wasn’t thinking.

He never figured that breaking into a rival high school’s hallway and vandalizing their mascot mural



would have such awful effects. He didn’t plan on getting caught and he certainly didn’t figure that his coach would make him sit out the next big basketball game.

He was the team’s best player, so that would hurt —

the team, for the points he wouldn’t make; and Monk, because basketball was his thing. It was the only thing, as far as he was concerned, because Monk planned on becoming a professional basketball player after graduation.

And so he was benched, plus Coach gave him an assignment. Monk had to write and present an essay about Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Not on Jabbar’s games, but on his life.

When Coach gave him the assignment, it seemed like everything and everyone was coming down on Monk. His parents and his boss at his part-time

job both scolded him for not paying attention to his other talents, his artistic work or his piano playing. His “girlfriend-ish,” Lark, was mad at Monk for not being supportive and for missing her big ball game. The guys on his team were embarrassed that they had to help clean the mural Monk had defaced. And then there was this ghost, an invisible spirit of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar that kept popping into Monk’s head, just when he didn’t need it. Why was Monk’s imagination so insistent on telling him things he didn’t want to hear?

He had a week to do the

assignment. How could he focus when so much was happening?

In a way, “Champion” is something rare: it’s a book that will appeal to anyone, teen to adult, but it leans more toward an audience of older boys and young men, and that’s good to see. Another happy thing: it’s graphic novel format has quite a bit of biography in it, as authors Abdul-Jabbar and Obstfeld write at length about Jabbar’s life and accomplishments. Readers will know that this isn’t just another comic-book-type story.

All that aside, the biggest appeal in this book is

that the authors talk the talk without preaching. They also uplift girls, parents, and local businesses inside this tale, without making any of the characters seem like caricatures and without ridiculing any group of people. It’s a good, moral story that doesn’t have the feel of a lecture and it’s hard not to get behind that. Artwork by Ed Laroche just underscores the fun of reading it.

If you or your basketball-crazy reader wants a good story with an inspirational biography embedded within, find “Champion.” You won’t be able to lay it down.

Tickets On Sale for 'The Outsiders' Coming to Dallas Nov. 4-16

Broadway Dallas and Broadway Across America are thrilled to announce that single tickets for the Tony Award-winning Best Musical, *The Outsiders*, based on the seminal novel by S.E. Hinton and Francis Ford Coppola's landmark motion picture, will go on sale Friday, August 15 at 10 a.m.

The *Outsiders* will play Dallas' Music Hall at Fair Park November 4-16, 2025, as part of the 2025/2026 Broadway Series presented by Broadway Dallas. Tickets for *The Outsiders* will be available at BroadwayDallas.org or by calling 800-982-2728.

Group orders of 10 or more may be placed by calling 214-426-4768 or emailing Groups@BroadwayDallas.org.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1967, Ponyboy Curtis, his best friend Johnny Cade and their Greaser family of 'outsiders' battle with their affluent rivals, the Socs. *The Outsiders* navigates the complexities of self-discovery as the Greasers dream about who they want to become in a world that may never accept them.

With a dynamic original score, *The Outsiders* is a



story of friendship, family, belonging...and the realization that there is still "lots of good in the world." The winner of four 2024 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, *The Outsiders* features a book by Tony Award nominee Adam Rapp with Tony Award winner Justin Levine, music and lyrics by Tony Award nominees Jamestown Revival (Jonathan Clay & Zach Chance) and Justin Levine, music supervision, orchestration & arrangements by Justin Levine, choreography by Tony Award nominees Rick Kuperman & Jeff Kuperman and is directed by Tony Award winner Danya Taymor.

The Outsiders features Scenography by Tony Award nominees AMP featuring Tatiana Kahvegian, Costume Design by Sara-

fina Bush, Lighting Design by Tony Award winner Brian MacDevitt, Sound Design by Tony Award winner Cody Spencer, Projection Design by Tony Award winner Hana S. Kim, Special Effects Design by Jeremy Chernick & Lillis Meeh, Hair & Wig Design by Alberto "Albee" Alvarado, Makeup Design by Tishonna Ferguson, Sound Effects Specialist Taylor Bense, Creative Consultant Jack Viertel, Speech Text & Dialect Coach Gigi Buffington, Sensitivity Specialist Ann C. James, Music Supervision & Additional Orchestrations by Tony Award nominee Matt Hinkley, Music Direction by Remy Kurs, Production Supervision by Beverly Jenkins, Production Stage Management by Edmond O'Neal.

Casting is by The TRC

Company/Xavier Rubiano, CSA. *The Outsiders* opened on Broadway on April 11, 2024, to rave reviews and continues to play to sold out houses at the Jacobs Theatre (242 West 45th Street). The New York Post proclaims *The Outsiders* as "The Best New Musical Of The Season." "Stunning Things Are Happening On The Stage Of The Jacobs Theater. Electrifying. Astonishing. Endlessly effective. *The Outsiders* has been made with so much love and sincerity. It is fair to call it golden." says The New York Times. Entertainment Weekly says, "The *Outsiders* has a heart of gold and The Power To Inspire an Entire Generation." "An Exhilarating World Of Movement With High-Octane Choreography," states New York Magazine. Time

Out New York calls it "Raw And More Pulse-Pounding than anything else on Broadway right now."

The Outsiders is produced on tour by The Araca Group, American Zoetrope, Olympus Theatricals, Sue Gilad & Larry Rogowsky, Angelina Jolie, Betsy Dollinger, Jonathan & Michelle Clay, Cristina Marie Vivenzio, The Shubert Organization, LaChanze & Marylee Fairbanks, Debra Martin Chase, Sony Music Masterworks, Jamestown Revival Theater, Jennifer & Jonathan Allan Soros, Tanning Entertainment, Tamlyn Brooke Shusterman, Mistry Theatrical Ventures, Galt & Irvin Productions, Tulsa Clarks, Paul & Margaret Liljenquist, Bob & Claire Patterson, Voltron Global Media, James L. Nederlander, Warner Bros.

Theatre Ventures, The John Gore Organization, Independent Presenters Network, Stephen Lindsay & Brett Sirota, Jeffrey Finn, Playhouse Square, ASR Productions, Indelible InK, Lionheart Productions, The Broadway Investor's Club, Starhawk Productions, Distant Rumble, GTR Productions, Green Leaf Partnership, Michael & Elizabeth Venuti, Leslie Kavanaugh, Deborah & Dave Smith, Belle Productions, Chas & Jen Grossman, Runnapa & Jim Teague, Michael & Molly Schroeder, Casey & Chelsea Baugh, Jim & Emily Flautt, Jon L. Morris, Becky Winkler, William Moran Hickey Jr. & William Moran Hickey III, Melissa Chamberlain & Michael McCartney, Wave-

See **OUTSIDERS**, Page 13

Rick Springfield to Headline Carrollton's 15th Annual Festival at the Switchyard

CARROLLTON — The City of Carrollton presents its 15th Annual Festival at the Switchyard, headlined by Grammy-winning Rick Springfield on Nov. 8.

Joining the lineup are Spin Doctors, Sixpence None the Richer, and Alien Ant Farm, with early performances by Midtown 10, Fusión Latina, Barefoot Na-

tion, and School of Rock (North Dallas).

The festival offers free concerts, children's entertainment, front-of-stage community performances, rides, games, face painting, balloon art, a beer garden, and food and vendor booths.

Attendees are encouraged to use DART, with free rides on the new Silver Line

connecting Plano, Richardson, Addison, Carrollton, Dallas, Coppell, Grapevine, and DFW Airport.

Location: Downtown Carrollton, 1106 S. Broadway Street. For full schedules, ticket info, and updates, visit carrollton-festival.com or follow @CarrolltonFestival on social media.



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Once Dominant, U.S. Agricultural Exports Are Faltering Amid Trade Disputes and Rising Competition

(Newswise) — URBANA, Ill. — The U.S. has traditionally been an agricultural powerhouse with a healthy trade surplus. But global dynamics are changing due to a confluence of political and economic factors. U.S. agricultural imports now exceed exports, and the trade deficit is projected to worsen in the coming years. In a new study, researchers from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and Texas Tech University discuss recent developments affecting the U.S. trade in row crops such as corn, soybeans, wheat, and cotton.

“For most of recent history, the U.S. was a net agricultural exporter. But in the last couple of years, that

has reversed, and what used to be a persistent surplus has turned into a persistent and growing deficit, where we’re importing much more than we export. Current projections estimate that the agricultural trade deficit will reach \$49 billion by the end of 2025,” said lead author William Ridley, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, part of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at U. of I. He conducted the study with Stephen Devadoss, professor of agricultural and applied economics at Texas Tech.

The researchers noted that imports have increased considerably, particularly

fruits and vegetables, such as avocados from Mexico, and canola oil from Canada. The U.S. continues to be a major producer of agricultural commodities, like corn, oilseeds, and cotton, but exports are stagnant or declining.

“Row crops are the backbone of U.S. agricultural exports, but markets are shifting as trade conflicts create uncertainty and instability. One of the main factors causing exports to nosedive is the ongoing trade dispute with China,” Ridley said.

As the U.S. imposed tariffs on Chinese imports, China retaliated with tariffs on U.S. agricultural commodities such as soybean, wheat, corn, and cotton. These products were strategically

targeted by China due to their importance for U.S. exports, and because they are primarily produced in states that support the Republican administration, the researchers noted.

From 2017 to 2018, the trade dispute resulted in U.S.-China export values declining by \$9 billion (73%) for soybeans, \$431.7 million (67%) for wheat, \$92.6 million (61%) for corn, and \$312.5 million (37%) for sorghum. The total value of lost agricultural exports amounted to around \$14 billion.

The Phase One trade deal

that was negotiated in 2020 briefly increased Chinese agricultural imports from the U.S., but trade quickly collapsed again, and China has effectively stopped buying soybeans, corn, cotton, and sorghum from the U.S., after finding trade partners elsewhere.

At the same time, the U.S. is losing its competitive edge to other big grain producers like Brazil, Canada, Australia, and Ukraine.

In their study, Ridley and Devadoss estimate the comparative advantage of major crop producers, taking into account factors such as

productivity growth, export and trade infrastructure, and government support for agriculture. They find that while U.S. agricultural productivity has remained stable, other countries have been catching up.

For example, Brazil’s soybean production has rapidly evolved due to expansions in farmland, dramatic improvements in productivity, and government investments in transportation infrastructure, and they have solidly surpassed the U.S. as the world’s leading soy-

See EXPORTS, Page 13



BLACKBURN FOUNDATION

The Blackburn Foundation is offering grants up to \$1,000 to teachers who organize community engagement activities for their students. Students should plan a project that has a positive and immediate impact for their community highlighting their efforts to improve relations. The project should include students interacting with community members and service organizations.

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Or email your resume to: careers@edbellconstruction.com

EDUCATION, from Page 1

away, though completing their education might just be the stabilizing force they need, said Oliveira. For immigrants from developing countries, the effects of a diploma can be exponential on social mobility, a diploma sometimes meaning the difference between poverty and a successful life. The American dream is very much still alive, said Oliveira.

“The promise of this meritocracy, that if you go to school and you work hard, you’re going to have an opportunity is really relevant for a lot of folks.”

U.S. classrooms are very different from those in Latin America or East Asia, said Oliveira, where there is more formality and deference to teachers. It is a huge jump coming from Latin America, she said, especially if you compare

public schooling in a place like Brazil, where they lack school books and teachers.

In China, on the other hand, students known for excelling in STEM fields, may sacrifice critical thinking due to a focus on repetitive rote learning, the International Journal of Chinese Education reported. Yet, critical thinking is expressed differently in different cultures, in East Asia, through a lens of harmony and respect for authority. South Korea’s definition of education is broader than landing a good job and academic achievement, said Oliveira. It also entails a certain dignity, harmony and respect for its elders, noted Oliveira.

The U. S. can learn from these systems as well as Scandinavian countries like Finland, which rank among the highest educa-

tion systems in the world. While prioritizing well-being, equity, and stress-free learning, their focus on critical thinking rather than standardized testing can improve innovation, Boston Brand Research reported. The American system might learn from this model and place a greater emphasis on worry-free learning, sociological needs, and equity.

According to Oliveira, children develop a sense of trust and belonging early on in the classroom. This relationship is important between a teacher and a student, as children share through storytelling. Without trust and a sense of belonging, exclusion will repeatedly generate trauma in the lives of young people as they try to establish their identities.

Teachers are often concerned they’ll traumatize their students by talking

about their struggles, yet the scientific recommendation is to discuss it. The Association of Black Psychologists recommend discussing Black history for every age group. The organization considers it vital to psychological well being, positive racial identity, healthy empathy, and a more accurate understanding of history.

Models now coming out of New York and Massachusetts also call for surrounding immigrant students with psychologists, social workers, and speech therapists. Schools are facing many challenges today in supporting students, economically, socially, in lan-

guage, and in staffing, said Oliveira, this, as family liaisons and student coordinators are disappearing from American classrooms.

The ending of diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and their budgets means it’ll be up to people to discuss the history that has affected their cultures, lift up those who have been affected by it and bring people together. Having a family night, potluck, or anything to bring the community together and build on trust is important, said Oliveira.

Angela Valenzuela advocates for additive schooling, or building on a student’s

culture while providing an authentic, caring relationship to support a student’s success. “They’re very proud of having made it. They’re very proud of where they came from, and they’re very proud of their food and their culture,” said Oliveira. Creating avenues where that can be displayed, authentically and not in holiday style only helps.

The people with the knowledge and experience doing DEI work are being pushed out, said Oliveira, and we’re losing that knowledge. As hundreds more employees are

See HOPE, Page 13

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FILM, from Page 9

tar OK, but fakes electric guitar on stage in a cheesy air guitar way. Scott's better at capturing the deep, painful emotions of the moment. Seasoned by a bit of romance and sparse joy. His steady and brilliant acting peaks in a scene in a therapist office. Anyone not moved beforehand, will blubber now. That's the mark of fine acting.

Strong makes Landau an emotional pin cushion, counselor, therapist and best buddy in ways that could earn him an Oscar® nom for best supporting actor. Not a seam in his performance. Young plays the single mom with the right amount of grit and hurt. The silent pauses and hollow stares given by Graham makes his eerie

portrayal of a complicated dad linger. The way his face is lit and filmed (cinematographer Masanobu Takayanagi, Silver Lining's Playbook) gives him a lost-soul image that your eyes and brain won't forget.

This bio/film takes a while to grow on you and sink in. It is not the rollicking, exhilarating experience many Springsteen fans will expect. But that

likely is the sacrifice the filmmakers and cast were willing to make to tell their story, their own way. And why should they have to explain it. When what they're thinking is right there on the screen.

For more information about the New York Film Festival go to <https://www.filmlinc.org/nyff/>

Visit Film Critic Dwight Brown at DwightBrown-Ink.com.

JUBILEE, from Page 10

tures the heart, struggle, and spirit of the man behind songs like "A Song for You," "Someday We'll All Be Free," and "This Christ-

mas."

The production delves into the influences and collaborations that shaped Hawthaway's artistry, offering

audiences a moving and deeply human portrait of a musical genius.

Running November 7-31, 2025, this production reflects Jubilee Theatre's mission to uplift, entertain, and

inspire through powerful storytelling rooted in African American culture and heritage.

For showtimes and ticket information, visit jubileetheatre.org.

EXPORTS, from Page 11

bean producer and exporter.

Furthermore, China is not only buying from other suppliers; the country is undertaking massive efforts to bolster its self-sufficiency, including major investments in research and development and expanding the use of genetically modified crop varieties.

"U.S. row crop exports are trending in a negative direction, and forecasts predict the downward trend will continue. Producers may look to other markets, but there's only one China, and they're not coming back tomorrow. Even if

you pulled these tariffs back right now, sales would not resume. And other markets have barriers to trade; for example, the EU has tight restrictions on imports of genetically modified crops," Ridley stated.

The researchers also highlight other factors influencing agricultural production and exports, including cuts in public funding for university research.

"There's a strong link between research funding and productivity, and productivity affects the position of the U.S. agricultural sector globally. That also includes

funding of research to mitigate the effects of climate change on the agricultural industry," Ridley said.

If there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon, he added, it is that the U.S. is working on new bilateral trade agreements with different countries.

"Economists view expanded access for our exports as a good thing to strive for if you want to ensure the viability of U.S. agriculture. Negotiating trade agreements isn't an easy thing to do, but it's something we should continue to pursue."

OUTSIDERS, from Page 10

length Productions, Rob O'Neill & Shane Snow, Eric Stine, Rachel Weinstein, Cornice Production-sand La Jolla Playhouse.

The Grammy-nominated Original Broadway Cast Recording of The Outsiders from Sony Masterworks Broadway is now avail-

able at <https://theoutsidersbroadway.Ink.to/castalbum>.

The world premiere of The Outsiders was produced by La Jolla Playhouse, Christopher Ashley, Artistic Director and Debby Buchholz, Managing Director, in March 2023.

HOPE, from Page 12

cut from the Department of Education, the U.S. system is losing the staff that fights discrimination, helps low-income students pursue college, and administers grants to low-income schools and Historically Black Colleges, PBS reported.

Historically, the first generation has found steeper climbs in social mobility, yet English language learners are at a disadvantage academically, scoring lower early on. Though these populations are diverse, many are of low income. A child's zip code may

actually be more important in development, said Oliveira, considering the poverty, overcrowding and underfunding in some schools.

Addressing education deficiencies to expand the talent pool and encourage innovation will not only improve the financial outlook of individuals, but also improve the economy and quality of life for everyone. Yet, without policies to lift up people of color, some won't have the chance to be as productive as they could be otherwise, and this will hurt everyone.



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Where Oh Where is My Hair?

Dr. James L. Snyder

It is true that I don't pay attention to many things in life. I guess I'm just too busy to notice everything.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage always asks me why I'm not paying attention. To keep engaged in that argument, I say, "I'm too poor to pay attention. Could I borrow \$0.25 from you?"

I have yet to get that \$0.25. But it is true, I don't pay attention.

It all started when I was in grade school. I had a hard time paying attention to my teacher. I don't remember how many times I was sent to the principal's office for this very thing.

Believe me, I have tried to pay attention throughout life, but it has been very difficult for me. I'm too poor to pay attention, and as I get older, the poorer I get.

All of this came to a head the other day when I walked into the bathroom to shave, brush my teeth and comb my hair. When I was combing my hair, I noticed there wasn't much hair to comb. The less hair I have, the longer it takes me to comb my hair. I wish I could explain that.

It then dawned on me that I was going bald. I then remembered my uncle who was very bald and explained it by saying, "Grass does not grow on a busy

street."

I'm beginning to understand what he meant. According to his definition, my head has been very busy the last few months. I'm just not sure what it's been busy doing.

Being bald has made me think that maybe I should start wearing a hat. That might cover up some of the bald spots.

Last week I was going to go to the barber. I told The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, "I'm going to my barber to get a haircut."

Just as I was walking out the door, she replied by saying, "Have you decided which hair you're going to get cut this week?"

As I closed the door, I heard her laughing, but I wasn't laughing on my side of the door.

When I came back from my barber The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage greeted me and said, "Did the barber cut the right hair?" And then she laughed as though it was something funny!

Pondering this, I was trying to find the answer to a straightforward question: Where did all my hair go? And, what scared it away?

What provokes me is, why does the hair on my face continue to grow while the hair on the top of my head has retired? Why can't I turn it around? Then I wouldn't have to shave every day.

When I was at my barbershop, I was tempted to ask if there was anything I could do to replace what had vanished on the top of my head that. Then, I didn't think it was a proper question to ask the barber.

I've tried a lot of things to cover up that bald spot on the top. I try to comb the hair from the side of my head up and over the top. That did not work at all. No matter what I did, nothing fixed that problem.

The good thing about being bald is I only see it when looking in the mirror. The only ones who see it are those whom I meet with during the day.

I then had another thought stomped through my brain. Why is it that men go bald but most women do not? I was tempted to ask The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, but then I thought she might answer this question in a way that would not make me too happy.

The more I keep The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage off the top of my head and the missing hair, the happier I'm going to be. Believe me, she can fix anything. I was afraid she would fix me, but I would not be happy with the fix.

Sometimes it's better to keep quiet about something. When you start asking questions, especially with The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, you often

get answers, and most of them aren't the ones you want to hear at the time. I have learned that silence is the best music to listen to, especially if you're married.

I wish I knew where my hair went so I could retrieve it and put it back where it belongs. Until then, I'm going to have to live with less hair on the top of my head.

I wished that having less hair on the top of my head would mean I wouldn't have to comb it as much.

Regardless of the hair on the top of my head or the lack thereof, combing my hair is quite a job in the morning.

In my devotional reading I read a verse from **Galatians 1:10**, "*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*"

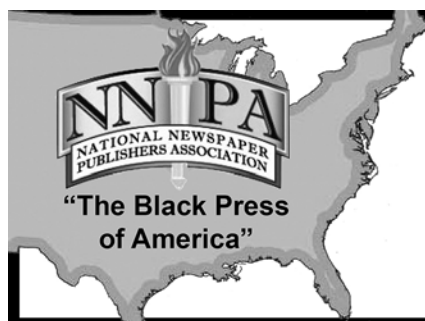
Thinking on this verse reminded me that sometimes I am more concerned about what people think

about my looks. Rather, I should be more concerned about what God thinks of me. Am I living a life that pleases Him?

When that is my daily focus, it does not matter about my hair or lack thereof.

Dr. James L. Snyder lives in Ocala, FL with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Telephone 1-352-216-3025, e-mail jamesnyder51@gmail.com, website www.james-snyderministries.com.

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Praying for School Children



Sister Tarpley
NDG
Religion
Editor

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know."
Jeremiah 33:3-4.

The story is told of a couple of businessmen in England who operate an international company, they have learned how important intimacy and the presence of God is to fulfilling His purposes for their business.

One of the partners was asked by God to trust Him and leave his job not knowing what the future would hold.

Eventually, he founded

an internet company that within a year was wiped out. The Christian directors started praying together - monthly at first, then, as things continued to worsen, weekly, and finally, as desperation set in, daily!

Today, the directors of the company see that the Lord is increasingly establishing their company's corporate identity and defining characteristic as their corporate intimacy with Him.

I retired 17 years ago from the Carrollton-Farmers Branch ISD (C-FB ISD); since September 26, 2013, the first day of classes for the C-FB ISD, I have taught as a replacement teacher (substitute) in the district.

Prior to going back into the classroom, I had been warned numerous of times

by family, friends and current teachers, that students have changed than what they were back in the 60's, 70's and 80's.

Since being back, I have indeed learned that students at the elementary, middle and high school levels have no respect for themselves, their parents or guardians, teachers and any other authority figure.

They are extremely loud when talking in the hallways, classrooms and especially in the cafeteria (I wonder if it's because they seem to have devices in their ears listening to music or other things.)

I found that I was acting and talking like other former and current teachers, complaining with every substitute and teacher.

One morning in my early daily prayer I pondered

what to do about the students that I encountered on a daily basis. I remember that these were not my students that I see every school day. I really didn't know them on a personal basis.

Were some of them promoted to the next grade level without learning the material in the last grade level (social promotion) as it is called?

Did some of these students come to school hungry? Did all of them get a good night's sleep? What is their environment like at home? Were any of them bullied before they came to school or their class?

Were any of them faced

with a drug problem? What about their best friend? Do all of the students believe they have a best friend? Do they have anyone they believe they can confide in? A teacher, neighbor, counselor.

Are there alcoholics and/or drug addicts living in their home? Are any of them being mentally or sexually abused? Do they have to fight on the way to school, in school or on the way home?

There are so many unanswered questions. But, I know a man that knows all of the answers. I know a man that cares about each and every student in all of the schools.

My responsibility and every Christian's responsibility is to pray for all children on a daily basis and ask Jesus to cover them, the facility, staff and their schools with His precious blood for peace and calmness in the midst of their storm.

We need to ask God to open up their understanding in their classes to be the best child that they can be, in school, at church and in their neighborhood.

Please help by doing your part and pray for all of our children; after all, they are our future.

(Editor's Note: This column originally ran in October 2013.)

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